

APPENDIX C

Glossary

Glossary of Terms¹

100-year floodplain: The area along the river corridor that would receive floodwaters during a 100-year flood event. A 100-year flood event has the probability of occurring 1% of the time during any given year. If a 100-year flood event occurs, the following year will still have the same probability for occurrence of a 100-year event. For the purposes of this plan, the 100-year floodplain also includes wetlands and meadows associated with the hydrologic and ecological processes of the river.

Adaptive Management: Adaptive management is a process that allows the development of a plan when some degree of biological and socioeconomic uncertainty exists. It requires a continual learning process, a reiterative evaluation of goals and approaches, and redirection based on an increased information base and changing public expectations (Baskerville 1985).

Bank: The area below the ordinary high water mark in a river or stream. The ordinary high water mark is defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as that line on the shore established by the fluctuations of water and indicated by physical characteristics such as a clear, natural line impressed on the bank, shelving, changes in the character

¹ See the *Merced River Plan/FEIS* for a more exhaustive glossary.

of soil, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, the presence of litter and debris, or other appropriate means that consider the characteristics of the surrounding areas.

Best Management Practices: Effective, feasible (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) conservation practices and land- and water-management measures that avoid or minimize adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources. Best management practices may include schedules for activities, prohibitions, maintenance guidelines, and other management practices.

Boundaries: The areas that receive protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Boundaries include an average of not more than 320 acres of land per mile, measured from the ordinary high water mark on both sides of the river. This equates to an average width of one-quarter mile on each side of the river.

California Wilderness Act of 1984: A federal law that designated a number of additional wilderness areas in California, including those in Yosemite National Park.

Classifications: The status of rivers or river segments under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (“wild,” “scenic,” or “recreational”). Classification is based on the existing level of access and human alteration of the site.

Comprehensive Management Plan: A plan to protect and enhance a Wild and Scenic River. The *Merced River Plan* is the National Park Service's comprehensive management plan for segments of the Merced River corridor under its jurisdiction.

Drive-to Campground: A campground with associated parking adjacent to individual campsites.

El Portal Administrative Site: The area outside the western boundary of the park along Highway 140 under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service used to locate park operations and administrative facilities for Yosemite National Park.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): A public document required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) that identifies and analyzes activities that might affect the human and natural environment.

Facilities: Buildings and the associated infrastructure such as roads, trails, and utilities.

Fen: An open wetland system with very high nutrients and productivity that receives some drainage from surrounding mineral soils and usually supports marsh-like vegetation (sedge, rushes, reeds, horsetails, grasses).

Floodplain: A nearly level alluvial plain that borders a stream and is subject to flooding unless protected artificially.

Free-flowing river: Existing or flowing in natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, riprapping, or other modification of the waterway (as defined in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act - 16 USC 1286 [b]).

High Sierra Camps: Overnight lodging facilities operated by the concessioner in the wilderness areas that include tent cabins, food service, and other amenities. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is one of the High Sierra Camps.

Impoundment: A dam or other structure to obstruct the flow of water in a river or stream.

Main stem (Merced River): The sections of the Merced River beginning at the headwaters near the Sierra Crest and continuing through Yosemite Valley, the Merced River gorge, El Portal, and further downstream.

Management zone: A geographical area for which management directions or prescriptions have been developed to determine what can and cannot occur in terms of resource management, visitor use, access, facilities or development, and park operations.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): The federal act that requires the development of an environmental impact statement (EIS) for federal actions that might have substantial environmental, social, or other impacts.

Natural processes: All processes, such as hydrologic, geologic, or ecosystemic, that are not the result of human manipulation.

Non-motorized watercraft: A class of boats that includes rafts, kayaks, inner tubes, and inflatable air mattresses.

Non-wilderness: Areas that have not been designated for special protection under the Wilderness Act.

Ordinary high water: The line on the shore established by the fluctuations of water and indicated by physical characteristics such as a clear, natural line impressed on the bank, shelving, changes in the character of soil, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, the presence of litter and debris, or other appropriate means that consider the characteristics of the surrounding areas.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values: Those resources in the corridor of a Wild and Scenic River that are of special value and warrant protection. Outstandingly Remarkable Values are the “scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values...that shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations” (16 USC 1272).

Paternoster lakes: A chain of lakes in a glacially carved region.

Potential wilderness additions: Areas officially designated as potential wilderness additions under the California Wilderness Act. This act mandates that “lands designated as potential wilderness additions shall be managed by the Secretary in so far as practicable as wilderness until such time as said lands are designated as wilderness.”

Prescription: A guideline that directs the management of a specific area by describing the type and intensity of activities, facilities, and park operations that can and cannot occur. See “management zone.”

Pristine: Unaltered, unpolluted by humans.

Record of Decision (ROD): The public document describing the decision made on selecting the “preferred alternative” in an environmental impact statement. See “environmental impact statement.”

Riparian areas: The land area and associated vegetation bordering a stream or river.

Riprap: A layer of large, durable fragments of broken rocks specially selected and graded, thrown together irregularly or fitted together to prevent erosion by waves or currents.

Riverine: Of or relating to a river. A riverine system includes all wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel, with two exceptions: (1) wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses, or lichens, and (2) habitats with water containing ocean-derived salts in excess of 0.5%. A channel is an open conduit either naturally or artificially created which periodically or continuously contains moving water, or which forms a connecting link between two bodies of standing water.

River corridor: The area within the boundaries of a Wild and Scenic River (e.g., the Merced River corridor).

River Protection Overlay: A buffer area within and adjacent to the river that allows for the protection and restoration of natural and aquatic ecosystem processes.

Section 35: The area on the South Fork of the Merced River, originally designated by the U.S. Geological Survey, that demarcates the “township of Wawona” and contains intermixed parcels of private and National Park Service lands.

South Fork (Merced River): The segments of the Merced River passing through Wawona and entering the main stem west of El Portal.

Superintendent’s Compendium: Pursuant to 36 CFR 1.5 and 1.6, this is a set of superintendent's orders that establishes restrictions, conditions of use, closures, and public use limits in park units over which a superintendent has jurisdiction.

User capacity: As it applies to parks, user capacity is the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource and social conditions based on the purpose and objectives of a park unit.

U-Shaped valley: A glacially carved valley having a pronounced parabolic cross-sectional profile suggesting the form of a broad letter “U” and characterized by steep sides and a nearly flat bottom.

Visitor experience: The perceptions, feelings, and reactions a park visitor has in relationship with the surrounding environment.

Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP): A process developed for the National Park Service to help manage the impacts of visitor use on the visitor experiences and resource conditions in national parks.

V-Shaped valley: A valley having a pronounced cross-profile suggesting the letter “V”, characterized by steep sides and short tributaries. Specifically, a young narrow valley resulting from downcutting by a stream.

Walk-in campground: A campground with consolidated parking areas separated from the individual campsites. Campers walk a short distance from the parking area to their campsites.

Water Resources Projects: Any dam, water conduit, reservoir, powerhouse, transmission line, or other project works under the Federal Power Act, or other construction of developments that would affect the free-flowing characteristics of a wild and scenic or congressionally authorized study river. In addition to projects licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, water resources projects may also include: dams; water diversion projects; fisheries habitat and watershed restoration/enhancement projects; bridges and other roadway construction/reconstruction projects; bank stabilization projects; channelization projects; levee construction; recreation facilities such as boat ramps and fishing piers; and, activities that require a 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (IWSRCC 1999).

Watershed: The region drained by, or contributing water to, a stream, lake, or other body of water. Synonym: basin or drainage basin.

Wetland: Wetlands are defined by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (CFR Section 328.3[b], 1986) as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: Those rivers receiving special protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Wilderness: Those areas protected by the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act. These areas are characterized by a lack of human interference in natural processes.

Wilderness Act of 1964: The Wilderness Act restricts development and activities to maintain certain places where wilderness conditions predominate.

Acronyms²

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FERC	Federal Energy Regulation Commission
GIS	Geographic Information System
IWSRCC	Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NPS	National Park Service
ORVs	Outstandingly Remarkable Values
PL	Public Law
ROD	Record of Decision

² See the *Merced River Plan/FEIS* for a more exhaustive list of acronyms.

RPO	River Protection Overlay
USC	United States Code
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VERP	Visitor Experience and Resource Protection